



Statehouse Statements

State Senator Connie Sipes & State Representative Bill Cochran

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Local leaders, families fight for Silvercrest

NEW ALBANY, Ind. – On the heels of a lawsuit to keep the Silvercrest Children's Development Center opened, today a group of concerned citizens joined together to respond to a recent state report and issue their own finding of fact.

State Senator Connie Sipes (D-New Albany) and State Representative Bill Cochran (D-New Albany) joined members of the Silvercrest Advisory Council, staff and parents at the event. In addition to releasing their own report, the group took issue with the process used by the Indiana Department of Health, the intent of the evaluation and assessment, the expertise of the evaluators and the alleged "facts" published in the state report.

"This is another example of how this administration moves ahead and makes decisions without having all the necessary facts or even consulting those who are most impacted by their choices," said Sipes. "These decisions are life-altering for many of these children and their families and we simply want to ensure that the state is making them based on facts and in the best interest of the students of Silvercrest."

"Sadly, what we believe is that the state did not do a fair or comprehensive review of Silvercrest. It appears to some of us their decision was made before they ever set foot in the facility and they simply wrote their report to support some pre-conceived objectives."

The response report, which was created to refute the state's findings and highlight successes at Silvercrest , finds that:

1. Silvercrest's administration was given no opportunity to review or respond to the state evaluation;
2. Parties involved in the review did not possess the necessary expertise to evaluate the program;
3. No specific methodology was followed;
4. Parties evaluating the facility did not spend adequate amounts of time to form a reasonable judgment;
5. Feedback from parents of students at Silvercrest were not included in the state report; and
6. The report fails to consider positive behavioral changes in students resulting from the program.

"Everyone has the same end goal – getting these kids the best education possible," said Rep. Cochran.

"However this group of people feels that the state is not considering all the facts. We need to slow this process down, involve the community, the parents and impartial experts to decide what is the best course of action."

The group hopes the alternative report will bring attention to the issue and force the state to reconsider closing the Silvercrest Children's Development Center.

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